



International climate action: priorities for the next agreement

Statement by the Chair, Mr Bernie Fraser

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Next year Australia will be called upon to present its climate change credentials and policy to the world at the global climate conference in Paris.

The conference will seek to reach agreement on concerted and collective action beyond 2020 consistent with keeping global average warming below 2°C, compared with pre-industrial levels. Preparations are now underway for this conference and some countries are expected to indicate their goals for climate action beyond 2020 by April 2015.

As an intended contribution to Australia's preparations for the Paris conference and the meetings leading up to it, the Climate Change Authority has today released the paper entitled *International climate change: priorities for the next agreement*.

The Paris conference follows the last comparable conference held in Copenhagen in 2009. Mr Fraser noted the forthcoming conference was likely to be held in rather more favourable circumstances than the last, which coincided with the early onset of the global financial crisis.

He also believed that since Copenhagen mainstream climate scientists had continued to strengthen their earlier findings on the links between human-induced increases in greenhouse gas emissions and the rise in average global temperatures.

The paper discusses several of the core priority issues which are expected to be considered in the meetings. These issues include:

- The collective goal to limit global warming to 2°C or below
- Post 2020 international emissions reduction targets for major emitting countries
- The common framework for tracking emissions and progress towards targets
- Greater clarity on the role the international trade in emission units will play in meeting targets
- Regular reviews of collective and individual efforts to reduce emissions.

Effective collective action to contain global warming is as much in Australia's interests as it is for other countries. Australia has played an active role at past international negotiations and, as a wealthy developed country and a high per capita emitter of greenhouse gases, it will be expected to carry a fair share of the post 2020 emissions reductions.

Background note

The Climate Change Authority is an independent statutory body established in 2012 to provide expert and balanced advice on climate change policy issues (including Australia's emission reductions goals). It comprises members with considerable expertise in relevant disciplines, including climate science and economic policy, and is backed by an experienced and independent secretariat. The Government has introduced a Bill to abolish the Authority; that Bill is still before the Parliament.